

EQUALIZING X DISTORT

Volume 09, Issue 04

October 2009



Ben and Luke at a show in Ottawa.

SCHOOL JERKS feature Ben and Ivan from TERMINAL STATE. Matt who is new to town joined on bass and Luke is a buddy of theirs sings in the band. Ben used to sing in TERMINAL STATE, but is now playing guitar in the School Jerks. They have a demo and a 3-song ep out on Riff Raff Records. This interview was live on the show on January 11th, 2009.

Introduce yourselves and tell us what you do in the band?

Matt (M): I'm Matt. I play bass.

Ben (B): Ben. I play guitar.

Luke (L): Luke. I sing.

Ivan (I): Ivan. Drums.

How long has SCHOOL JERKS been together?

B: We played our first show in mid-June so a little over six months.

Just six months. How did the band form?

B: Me and Ivan were in TERMINAL STATE before and when that broke up we kept playing. We had the idea that we wanted Luke to be the singer. So we worked out a handful of songs. We gave Luke a tape to practise with.

And how did you find Matt?

M: I was lying on the side of the road.

You thought he would be a great bass player. He is lying on the side of the road.

M: Actually I went to a party at Ben's house, for some reason, it was a rager. He was talking about stuff he was working on and he wanted to play music with somebody and asked me to come down and jam with him one night.

B: Matt was new to town at the time. We had heard that there was a dude around that liked to cause trouble and listen to punk rock so we had

SCHOOL JERKS

to find him.

And eventually you stumbled across him at your house.

B: Yeah.

Where does the name SCHOOL JERKS come from?

L: GUNS 'N ROSES.

Does it really?

B: In a roundabout way. It is from a VAINS song.

L: And there is a guy from GUNS 'N ROSES in that band.

So tell me the story. Where does the name come from? I don't get it yet.

B: We had a show booked and we didn't have a band name and the show was coming up in about a week so we just got together and tried to come up with a band name and we couldn't so we settled on SCHOOL JERKS.

Does it really have a GUNS N ROSES reference?

B: Well there is a connection there.

I: There is a song by the VAINS called "School Jerks" and it is a pretty sweet song.

M: The GUNS N ROSES drummer played in the

VAINS.

What was the idea of the band when you were first got together?

B: I think we are kind of doing the same thing as we originally set out to do.

In TERMINAL STATE?

B: Kind of like TERMINAL STATE but be a punk band.

Well there is a resemblance in sound.

B: I think when Luke came in things changed a lot because his vocal style is

He does have a different vocal style.

B: It's more punk.

I: We just wanted to play very stripped down punk. It is really simple and juvenile.

B: This is what we started doing in TERMINAL STATE and then TERMINAL STATE evolved and then we said "Fuck This." We just want to go back to playing straight forward punk rock.

L: I looked at his lyrics and I thought they weren't what we might want to do so I took his idea and wrote something different. You know what I am talking about. More extreme.

B: The lyrics are more extreme. The style is more extreme.

The vocal style reminds me of Darby Crash meets

B: Luke reminds me of Darby Crash.

...meets Blaine Cook. It kind of has that Tasmanian devil sound to it. Do you know what I mean?

B: I've heard that name but I don't really know who Blaine Cook is.

He was in the ACCUSED. He was in the FARTZ too. You guys were talking about Duff McKagan, he was in the original FARTZ.

L: Fuck. There is a lot more to this GUNS N ROSES reference.

Okay so who do you consider influences on the band?

M: GUNS N ROSES.

But really.

B: A lot of them are pretty obvious like classic early hardcore records BLACK FLAG, DESCENDENTS, CIRCLE JERKS all those kind of records.

I: Killed by Death stuff.

Is there any coincidence that "Make it Blank" sounds like "Nervous Breakdown"?

B: Yeah. That was on the demo. It is a total rip off of the rhythm of that song. People have said that and I am not too concerned. We don't play it anymore. It's just on the demo.

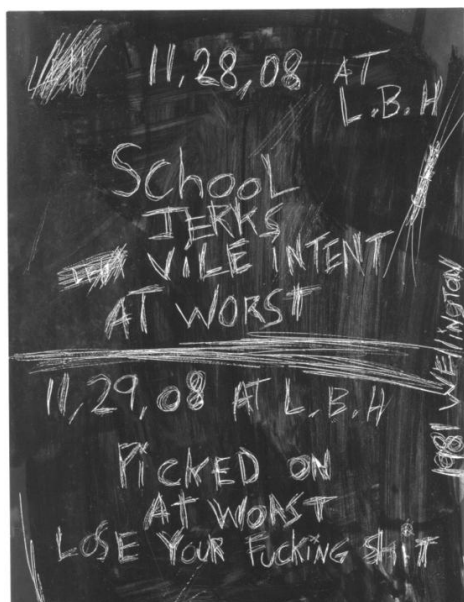
We started off the show with it.

L: You to go.

B: Now we are outed as

No no. You didn't play it in your set so I thought I would try and play something that you didn't play right. There was a different reason for why I played it.

B: I think it is really derivative but I don't really care. People throw around this generic hardcore



punk thing like it's a problem. I don't see the problem at all. That's how rock 'n' roll music works and ...

Yeah and I am certainly not criticizing it. I love early FLAG so I love this song.

L: I heard a little tone there.

No I love BLACK FLAG so it's good. So if you had to limit your music collection to five punk releases as a band what would they be? You got to put your heads together and make it sound like SCHOOL JERKS. You can take thirty years of punk and make it sound like SCHOOL JERKS. What would you pull?

B: The RAMONES first two records.

L: Maybe just the first if we only have five records.

M: I would say ANGRY SAMOANS "Back from Samoa".

B: GERMS "G.I." How about "Boston not L.A."? That's one record.

L: You can't do that.

B: I'm cheating.

That's okay. I will take it. Comps count.

L: The BLACK FLAG discography then. "Everything Went Black"?

B: I'd rather have "The First Four Years".

You have to have some BLACK FLAG in there.

B: I don't know. Five records isn't a lot.

It's not.

L: Getting all teary eyed.

What are some of the things you sing about?

L: There are some things that I could say that I absolutely don't care about, but most of the time it is just fucking around. It is really just making lewd jokes. We're not going like "Lady of the Lake" kind of shit.

B: I think your songs are semi-serious but they are also not taking themselves too seriously. It is somewhere in there.

L: Like the DICTATORS I would say.

B: Well yeah because the DICTATORS is fun, but they still have something to say about

L: Yeah you are fucking around but even fucking around you are still saying....

B: ...you are making a statement. You are. By fucking around you are making a statement. Having fun and punk rock and all that.

L: Yeah I would say that.

Okay. The song "Welfare". What's that about?

L: I was on welfare for a bit and I was thinking it was kind of cool that everybody was working for me as if I kind of have slaves or something. You are all working your jobs so I can do nothing.

B: Luke's a crusty basically. Get a job.

L: I was feeling like I was the king. At that time it was a joke about being on welfare.

Okay. "High School"? "High School" seems like an apt song for a band called SCHOOL JERKS.

L: It has to do with us naming the band. It was talking about school and ...

B: That one was written in the basement as we were recording the vocals, so...

That's okay there is a kernel of a point there am I right?

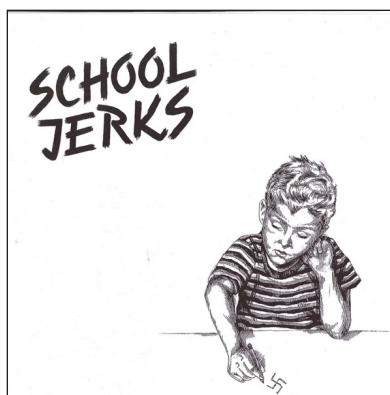
B: Yeah it is kind of our theme song.

A lot of bands right there own song and you didn't name it "School Jerks" which is good of you. Umm "Guest List" ?

L: That is about people being too hot shit. I feel sometimes that people get too comfortable instead of just breaking out and doing what they really want to do because everyone around thinks it's the right thing to do and then you really aren't yourself.

The song "Passed Out" does that have a story behind it?

L: I was at an ANTI-FLAG show a long time ago and I was drumming on Andy Flag's van and he was like "Excuse me. We have to tour in this van." And I was like "I'm sorry." And they got really pissed at me. Then I went to go by some



**CIUT 89.5 FM - "Equalizing Distort"
Top 10 Hardcore Releases
for July 2009**

Band	Title	Format	Label
1. KEEP IT CLEAR	Self-Titled	ep	Self-Released
2. YHTEISKUNNAN YSTAVAT?	"Porojen Maa"	ep	Roku
3. SACRED SHOCK	"You're Not With Us"	LP	Residue
4. BITE DOWN	"Doomsday Machine"	ep	Crucial Response
5. GERM ATTACK	"They Live We Sleep"	CD	MCR Company
6. PAHAA VERTA	"VVVVV"	ep	Roku
7. ZILEMMA	"Brave for Slave"	CD ep	MCR Company
8. CANADIAN RIFLE	"Visibility Zero"	LP	Residue
9. THE ROGUE NATION	"Be Your Own Rogue Nation"	CD	Suicide Watch
10. THE HUSSY	"Winter Daze"	ep	A Fistful of Records

Equalizing Distort can be heard every Sunday night on CIUT 89.5 FM at 10:00 pm. The top 10 countdown can be heard in its entirety, complete with previews of the picks and analysis on the previous month in hardcore, on the last Sunday of the month.

EQUALIZING DISTORT

VOLUME 09, ISSUE 04

EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT MONTHLY is an extension of the weekly radio show heard on CIUT 89.5 FM every Sunday nights from 10:00pm 'til midnight (Participants: Stefan Babcock, D'Arcy Rix-Hayes, Stephe Perry, and Ian Wilkinson).

The show dedicates itself to the underground hardcore punk scene. There is a particular emphasis on international releases in the developing thrash, power violence, straight edge, retro punk, garage, Killed By Death, the crust, and oi scenes, which means we play material like Esperanza, Bunny Skulls, Shut Eyes, the Rotten, Dirtbombs, the Gears, Su19b, and Rum Runner.

There is a weekly demo feature (paying homage to the cassette format), weekly event listings, and a monthly top 10 retrospective look at new releases.

Equalizing-X-Distort
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Ben and Matt in the old Stone Studio.

wine at the wine rack because I was underage at the time and then I drank too much or to the extent that the security guards said "What's that on your breathe?" and they wouldn't let me in and I started getting upset because I wasn't getting into the ANTI-FLAG show and then I started puking to try and get it off my breathe or to get it out of my system and then I woke up and the cops were there and they called my mom. I was like "Holy Shit. What's going on?" And they were like "You could have died. Someone could have stabbed you or killed you while you were asleep behind this ANTI-FLAG show." And also hopefully my mom listening. So that's how it went down.

Cool. "Ugly Faces"?

L: Ben wrote that song but then I kind of re-did it. It's about going around town and being really upset and everyone else around you making it even worse. It's not even there fault, although sometimes it is. Its Complicated.

M: It's a very deep song.

L: Very deep. Very profound.

You wrote a song called "Rock 'n' roll, Part III". Is there a parts I and II?

M: Gary Glitter.

B: It is just a joke on....like who the fuck calls a song "Rock 'n' roll, Part II"? We kind of figured it was the ultimate rock 'n' roll song that had put to shame any rock 'n' roll songs written before.

L: And MEGADEATH tried to do that too apparently. I was watching Nardwaur vs. MEGADEATH and they said "We are going to make rock 'n' roll, part III". We didn't know this before and I told Ben MEGADEATH were going to try but we did what they didn't

dare.

M: We have GUNS 'N ROSES and MEGADEATH ties in our band.

L: Yeah because he was too busy crying with METALLICA.

B: That's another story for another day.

You do a song called "Problems".

B: We kind of write some of the songs together.

L: For the demo he wrote lyrics and I felt I could do the same theme and just do it a little sweeter.

B: And it was better because I didn't have much to say.

What would be your favourite song from a lyrical standpoint and why do you like it?

L: We just named the song today. "The Rest of Us".

What's that about?

L: It's about people that think that they are not going to get so much money in their life, then they buy really expensive things and then walk around town going "Look at this. I got a \$200 pair of shoes on". I'm like "Dude you can't even afford those shoes" but they are so happy that they have the shoes and that they're showing off. It is about people like that and feeling really sorry for them. And also shitting on them because that's what we do in this band. We are just heartless bastards.

Well its a ridiculous thing to boast about.

What about the rest of you. Do you have a favourite song from a lyrical standpoint?

M: I personally don't know any lyrics to any of our songs. I know the names of them and that's about it. Half of them I don't even know the names. It's like the fast one. Drum start. Guitar start.

B: I like "Passed Out".

I: I like "Passed Out",

too.

B: It is funny.



I: It makes me giggle.

B: That's what we were talking about before. It has a point to it but also it is fun. He says some funny shit. Maybe inadvertently. I don't know. But it makes me laugh.

Tell us about the demo. How long ago did you record it ?

I: It was in November or December of 2007.

B: Me and Ivan recorded that out in my garage. And then my neighbour came out....

I: Yeah much to the joy of your Portuguese neighbour.

B: Let's not get into the racial thing here, but he started screaming at us.

You should have recorded him.

B: We did the drums, guitars and bass in November 2007.

So mostly the bed tracks.

B: Then we started jamming with these guys over last winter and around March Luke was ready to put the vocals on. Then we started passing around copies of that in April.

Is it like a four track or an 8 track recording?

B: We did each instrument individually and we did it on a MAC.

It sounds great for that. I mean I thought you went into a studio so.

B: That was my recording debut there.

Good job. Are you going to be using the demo songs for anything? Or is anyone going to release it.

B: We actually want to stop dubbing them. We made about 200 copies. We have a handful left. We should have a 45 coming out any day now.

Is that a different recording?

B: Yeah. Its three songs that we recorded in May. Again with the same idea that we did the bed tracks in May then let Luke work on it a little more, being able to listen to the bed tracks at home, and then the vocals were done in July.

I: It was supposed to be more than three songs. Stuff just didn't work out.

Did you also record the new ep?

B: Yeah.

L: Yeah, we just played them right now.

That's amazing.

M: It was part on a four track and part on a MAC. We recorded everything individually again but we did the drums to tape. To a four track then transferred that over to the computer and put on all the other instruments.

M: That was all in Luke's parents basement.

I: The drums we did at a rehearsal space that we used to have before we got kicked out.

B: We had a rehearsal space for thirty grand days. Now we practise in Luke's parents' basement which is pretty awesome that they let us do that.

L: Anyone who has been to our house shows knows what the basement is about.

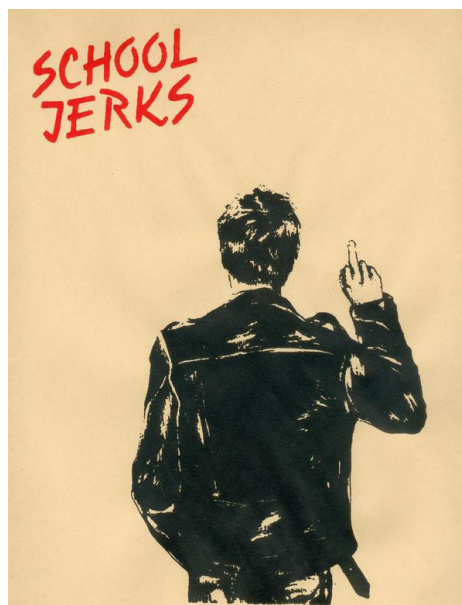
It's about goodness.

B: A lot of fun times have been had.

So you have a three song recording. Are all three songs going to come out?

B: Like Ivan was saying we didn't want to put out just three songs. We started with six.

I: It turned into four. It seemed like four was really going to happen, but we had to scrap one



of them.

B: There were some problems recording.

Do you know what label is putting this out?

B: It is supposed to be coming out on *Riff Raff Records* out of Virginia. They have done a handful of records. They did a BRUTAL KNIGHTS "Life Ain't Cool".

M: Yeah. A SHOOT IT UP / ANALINGUS split.

L: What about the DOUBLE NEGATIVE record he is supposed to put out?

That's good company.

M: Yeah.

So when do you expect it out?

M: Last December.

But when do you think it might come out?

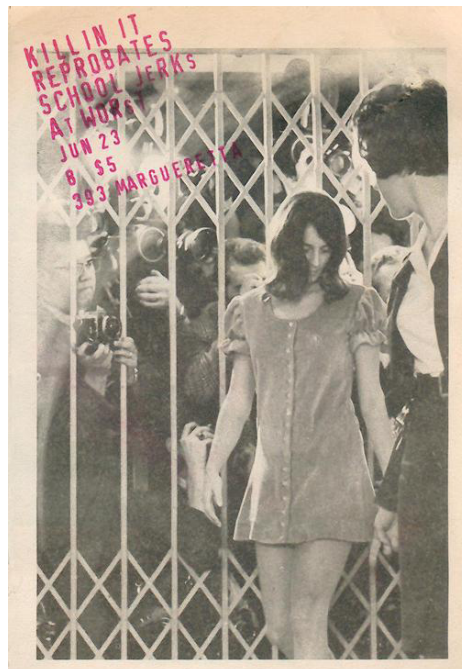
Next February? March?

B: February, we hope.

Do you have any plans to record any more material?

I: Next weekend we are going to start recording some more stuff.

You have a lot of songs.



B: We want to get some of those down.

Have many people heard you from outside of the city?

B: We're huge.

No, but have people contacted you about putting out material?

M: A couple.

B: We are not sure what the next record will come out on but we have heard from a few people so we have some ideas.

L: We have some people that just like us from other places which is cool.

B: As far as playing we haven't been able to get down to the States yet. We don't have a record out yet, and there are some legal problems with the border at this point. We've just been up to Ottawa and Montreal as far as out of town goes. That was a lot of fun. Once the record comes out and we sort out all the legal stuff we should be able to try and do a little mini tour.

Who are some of the people you have played with so far?

M: BLACK TIME and DILLINGER 4.

B: Those are the big ones. The heavy hitters.

L: We played with RUSH.

M: We were supposed to play with five metal bands that I don't remember the names of.

B: We played with BAD SKIN quite a bit. The REPROBATES.

What are your thoughts on the Toronto scene at the moment ?

B: It's alright. It's really different then the Toronto scene was even a year ago. I was saying this to you earlier tonight that there are a ton of new bands half of which I haven't even seen. A lot of younger people.

L: And the BAD SKIN house.

B: Yeah it is nice that they are doing shows at their house. It is really awesome. It was something definitely lacking in Toronto for some time.

I: BAD SKIN are definitely wicked.

B: I am pretty happy with the way things are now. A few years ago it seemed like there were some people around that weren't very punk and now people are enjoying themselves. That's why we are here. That's our job. I take it seriously.

L: I bench a good amount.

I: That's not punk.

L: That's hardcore, you know - BIOHAZARD shit.

Yeah that's how punk it is. How can people get in touch with the band ? What's the best way to reach you?

I: Probably myspace. We are a myspace friendly band.

B: It exists. Its free. There is nothing funny about myspace. So myspace.com/schooljerks

I: And schooljerks@gmail.com.

L: Or go to BAD SKIN's house and pass on a message. Just write a message on somebody's face while they are passed out.

Any last comments ?

B: Thanks for having us on here and thanks for always having bands here.

I: It's awesome. It's important.

L: We are going to tear this shit down right now.

Excellent. It is coming down sometime so it might as well be now.